

Aspects of Parenting Styles and the Expressed Fears of a Selected Group of Pre-school Children

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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Summary

The main aim of the present study was to explore the nature of pre-school parenting in a low to average socio-economic target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area. Specific attention was given to the main parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian or permissive) utilized by the sample of parents of pre-school children included in this research. Attention was also given to 11 specific parenting dimensions included in the parenting styles and to the levels of psychological control utilized by the sample parents included. The relationship between parenting and certain biographical variables, such as culture and gender of the child, as well as with the specific developmental outcome of expressed fears in their pre-school children was also investigated. Data on the expressed fears, with regard to number, as reported by the pre-school children, was obtained in a related study (Keller, in press).

Participants in the current study (N=91) included the fathers (n=43) and mothers (n=48) of the pre-school children (N=50) utilized in the related study (Keller, in press). Measures included a Biographical Questionnaire, the Parenting Styles & Dimensions Questionnaire (PSD) and the Psychological Control Scale.

The study revealed that the majority of pre-school parents in this low to average socio-economic status area predominantly utilized an authoritative parenting style, complemented by high levels of responsiveness, warmth and support, and low levels of psychological control. Further exploration revealed that psychological controlling parenting style characteristic of parents in this target area, reflects non-reasoning or punitive parenting in both fathers and mothers, while highly responsive mothers exhibit low levels of psychological control.

Consistent with previous South African research, similarities in parenting outweighed the differences (Gerdes, Coetzee & Cronjé, 1996). Firstly, the study revealed a significant positive correlation between paternal and maternal parenting. Secondly, the study revealed that no statistically significant cross-cultural differences exist between parenting utilized by the white and coloured pre-school parents included in this research. Furthermore, besides mothers reporting higher democratic participation in

parenting with the pre-school girls than boys, no other cross-gender differences exist between paternal and maternal parenting style, the included dimensions and psychological control.

Contrary to previous research linking permissive parenting to internalizing behaviour in pre-school children (Hart et al., 1995), a positive relationship was found between maternal authoritative parenting style and the amount of expressed fears ($r=0.35$; $p<0.05$) in pre-school children. To validate these findings, it is necessary to measure other internalizing behaviours in pre-school children as well.

Opsomming

Die hoofdoelwit van die huidige studie was om ondersoek in te stel na die aard van ouerskap in 'n lae tot middel sosio-ekonomiese teiken-area in die Goodwood Munisipale gebied. Spesifieke aandag is geskenk aan die tipe ouerskapstyl (outoritatief, outoritêr of permissief) wat die meeste benut word deur die steekproef ouers van voorskoolse kinders. Aandag is ook geskenk aan 11 spesifieke ouerskap-dimensies wat deur die bogenoemde ouerskapstyle omvat word en ook aan die vlakke van psigologiese beheer wat kenmerkend is van ouerskap deur die steekproef ouers ingesluit in die studie. Die verhouding tussen ouerskap en die biografiese veranderlikes soos kultuur en geslag van die kind en ook die spesifieke ontwikkelingsuitkoms van gerapporteerde vrese deur die voorskoolse kinders van die steekproef ouers, is ook ondersoek. Data van toepassing op die aantal gerapporteerde vrese van die voorskoolse kinders is ingesamel tydens 'n verwante studie (Keller, in druk).

Deelnemers aan die huidige studie (N=91) het die vaders (n=43) en moeders (n=48) van die voorskoolse kinders (N=50) wat in die verwante studie geselekteer is, ingesluit (Keller, in druk). Meetinstrumente wat aangewend is tydens data-insameling in die huidige studie het 'n Biografiese vraelys, die *Parenting Styles & Dimensions Questionnaire (PSD)* en die *Psychological Control Scale* ingesluit.

Die studie het bevind dat die meerderheid voorskoolse ouers in hierdie lae - tot middel klas sosio-ekonomiese area oorwegend 'n outoritatiewe ouerskapstyl benut, wat aangevul word deur hoë vlakke van responsiwiteit, warmte en ondersteuning, en lae vlakke van psigologiese beheer. Verdere ondersoek het aan die lig gebring dat psigologiese beheer deur ouers in hierdie teikenarea gekenmerk word deur nie-redenerende of strawwende ouerskap in beide vaders en moeders, terwyl hoog-responsiewe moeders lae vlakke van psigologiese beheer toon.

In ooreenstemming met vorige Suid-Afrikaanse navorsing, het ooreenkomste in ouerskap ook in hierdie studie verskille oortref (Gerdes, Coetzee & Cronjé, 1996). Eerstens het die studie 'n positiewe korrelasie tussen paternale en maternale ouerskap

uitgelig. Tweedens het die studie aan die lig gebring dat daar nie beduidende kruiskulturele verskille tussen ouerskap van die steekproef blanke en gekleurde ouers bestaan nie. Behalwe vir moeders wat meer demokratiese deelname rapporteer tydens ouerskap van die voorskoolse dogters as seuns, is geen ander geslagsverskille ten opsigte van hantering van voorskoolse seuns en dogters gemeld tussen maternale en paternale ouerskapstyl, die ingeslote dimensies en psigologiese beheer nie.

In teenstelling met vorige navorsing wat permissiewe ouerskap verbind aan internaliserende gedrag in voorskoolse kinders (Hart et al., 1995), het die huidige studie 'n positiewe verhouding gevind tussen maternale demokratiese ouerskapstyl en die aantal vrese gerapporteer deur die voorskoolse kinders ($r=0.35$; $p<0.05$). Verdere navorsing wat ook ander internaliserende gedrag in voorskoolse kinders meet, is nodig om hierdie bevindinge te valideer.

This work is the result of a research project, which is of the same extent as that required for master's theses.

It is a rule within the Department of Psychology that the report of the research may take the form of an article, which is ready for submission for publication to a scientific journal.

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Table of Contents	Page
Declaration	ii
Summary	iii
Opsomming	v
Statement of Department	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
List of Tables	x
1. Introduction	1
2. Method	10
2.1. Participants	11
2.2. Measuring Instruments	13
2.3. Procedure	16
2.4. Statistical Analysis	17
3. Results	18
4. Discussion	23
5. Conclusion	30
List of References	33
Addenda	
Addendum A	40
Addendum B	42
Addendum C	45
Addendum D	46

List of Tables

Table of Contents	Page
1. Demographic Information of Pre-school Children of Families included in this Research	11
2. Demographic Information of Parents included this Research	12
3. Frequency table of the Expressed Fears, with regard to Number and Content, of Pre-school Boys and Girls	16
4. Results of Parenting Styles and Psychological Control of Respondents	18
5. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for Paternal and Maternal Parenting Styles and Psychological Control	19
6. Results of Spearman's Rho Correlational Matrix for Paternal and Maternal Parenting Style and Psychological Control	19
7. Results of a Frequency Analysis of Paternal and Maternal Parenting Dimensions	20

1. Introduction

Considerable evidence has accrued to justify the claim that what normal parents do or fail to do crucially affects their children's development (Baumrind, 1993). Authorities on child development have generally accepted the assumption that parents, as primary caregivers, exert the original and perhaps the most significant influence on the development of the child's present and future emotional health (Leslie, 1988). Researchers such as Diane Baumrind (1965, 1966, 1968, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1993) have found that parenting styles have an impact on the personality of the developing child (Craig, 1996, Maccoby, 1980). Fear is part of the normal emotional development of children (Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998). One of the many variables supposed to affect a child's fearfulness, is the child-rearing technique (Baumrind, 1966, 1968, 1989, 1991; Baumrind & Black, 1967; Maccoby, 1980).

Although many childhood fears are mild, age-specific, transitory and possess adaptive value, they may become intense and persist over time, resulting in major distress to the child (Bauer, 1976; Eme & Schmidt, 1978; King, Ollendick & Tonge, 1997; Louw et al., 1998; Ollendick, Matson & Helsel, 1985; Ollendick, Yule, & Ollier, 1991; Schaefer & Millman, 1981; Wenar, 1990). Fears in childhood are frequently related to other unpleasant emotions, such as anxiety (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998, Ollendick, 1983; Ollendick et al., 1991). Moreover, there is evidence that childhood anxiety may be predictive of pathology at later developmental stages of an adult's life (Achenbach, 1990; Miller, Boyer, & Rodoletz, 1990).

Besides a positive correlation between fear and anxiety, research has found that highly fearful children possess lower self-concepts and are more external in their locus of control orientation (Ollendick, 1983). Thus, highly fearful children tend to be overly anxious and feel less good about themselves or their abilities to control events around them. Fears and anxieties of children have further been shown to affect learning and progress at school (Phillips, 1978 quoted in King & Ollendick, 1989; Schaefer & Millman, 1981). The implication is that fearfulness interferes with children's ability to function efficiently and the distress produced when anxiety is manifested in children warrants attention.

Given the powerful and substantial role families play in children's lives, it is not surprising that researchers have long been interested in understanding the influence that family

interaction styles may have in the etiology and/ or maintenance of child maladjustment and psychopathology (Achenbach, 1990; Ebata, Petersen, & Conger, 1990; Kortlander, Kendall, & Panichelli-Mindel, 1997; Martin, Halverson, Wampler, & Hollet-Wright, 1991; Muris, Steerneman, Merckelbach & Meesters, 1996; Rutter, 1990; Siqueland, Kendall & Steinberg, 1996). Although such literature is mounting, it has centred largely on the relation of parenting or family interaction styles and externalising behaviour and disorders. In contrast, little is known about familial influences on internalising childhood behaviour (Siqueland et al., 1996). Anxious and fearful children are often well-behaved and are typically less disruptive around their parents and teachers than children with externalising behaviour and, therefore, have been less often studied, even though fearfulness may interfere with children's ability to function efficiently (Kortlander et al., 1997; Siqueland et al., 1996). The current study contributes to existing literature by obtaining a better understanding of parenting styles utilised, as well as the relation between the parenting styles and the expressed fears of children. The expressed fears are investigated with regard to number in a related study (Keller, in press).

According to King et al. (1997), focusing on the family context, particularly child-parent interactions, is likely to be fruitful in terms of understanding the etiology, development and maintenance of severe fears and anxieties in children. According to Schaefer and Millman (1981) childhood fears may develop in reaction to family atmosphere. Criticism and scolding, overly demanding and strict parenting, or overly permissive parenting on the other hand, and the modelling of fears by parents may lead to higher fearfulness in their children (Schaefer & Millman, 1981). A study focusing on parenting and its relationship to expressed fears in children may be valuable during parental guidance aimed at the prevention of normal developmental fears aggravating to symptoms of intense anxiety. A study by Lapouse and Monk (quoted in Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1997) showed that mothers underestimated the existence of fears in their children by 41%. A South African study of milieu-disadvantaged parents found that 96,46% of parents had a learning need to be educated on handling their children's fears and anxieties (Dicker, Ferreira & Pretorius, 1995).

In the current study, the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1986) was used as the meta-theory, in which the social learning theory was incorporated to explain the

influence of parenting on childhood fears. Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development is composed of four distinct, but interrelated systems, namely the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Lerner, Castellino, Terry, Villarruel & McKinney, 1995). From an ecosystemic point of view, parents and siblings form part of the microsystem, which influences the development of the pre-school child (Walsh, 1993). Other microsystems of childhood life include the pre-primary school setting, involving both child-teacher and child-peer interactions, but the family remains the major microsystem for child development in our society (Belsky, 1984; Lerner et al., 1995). Even though the current study emphasized the family system, it is important to remember that this microsystem is not operating in isolation, but is continuously influencing, or influenced by one or more of society's larger systems which constitute the meso-, exo-, and macrosystems (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1998). In the current study, specific attention was also given to how culture, as part of the macrosystem of human development may affect parenting as part of the microsystem in which the child functions (Lerner et al., 1995). Values about child-rearing affect the behaviours developed by a child and can have implications for whether the child survives developmentally (Baumrind quoted in Lerner et al., 1995).

From a systems perspective, every event within the family is effected by multiple forces operating within that system. Thus, the symptomatic behaviour of any individual within the family is understood to be a manifestation of the interactional processes taking place within the family system as a whole (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1998). Ongoing relationships and enduring transactional patterns, such as parenting style, thus represent the essential aspects in a family system. According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1998) nurturance, guidance, limit-setting, and socialization experiences are all important in the child-parent subsystem.

For the purpose of the current study, parenting style can be defined as "aggregates or constellations of behaviours that describe parent-child interactions over a wide range of situations and that are presumed to create a pervasive interactional climate" (Mize & Pettit, quoted in Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, McNeilly-Choque, 1998, p. 688). This is consistent with the current definition of parenting styles in Western literature (Hart et al., 1998). According to Holden and Miller (1999), the trait approach is the oldest and most

prominent approach to the study of parents. It depicts the essential ingredient of parenting as being found in recurrent patterns of behaviour embodied by a parent. Baumrind's model of parenting styles, a trait approach to parenting, encompasses parents' attitudes and values about their parenting, their beliefs about the nature of their children, as well as their specific socialization-practices (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen & Hart, 1995).

Baumrind's typological model of parenting styles was chosen for the current study because of its multidimensional character, its typological clarity, and its empirical efficacy (Buri, 1991). Few researchers have tested Baumrind's typology and theories on parenting practices in developing countries (Heath, 1995). This type of cross-cultural research is critically important to the further understanding of cultural differences regarding Baumrind's typology and resultant child outcomes in general, and specifically in a developing, multi-cultural country such as South Africa.

Baumrind's typological model of parenting styles is a global characterisation that varies along the dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness (Baumrind, 1991; 1993; Craig, 1996; Hart et al., 1998; Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996; Smetana, 1994). Baumrind (1991) used the two dimensions to derive the classification of parenting behaviour that describes how parents reconcile the joint needs of children for nurturance and limit setting. The operational definitions of these prototypes – authoritative, authoritarian and permissive – differ somewhat depending on the social context, developmental period, and method of assessment, but share certain essential features (Baumrind, 1966, 1991; Craig, 1996; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Heath, 1995; Lewis, 1981; Louw et al., 1998; Maccoby, 1980; Smetana, 1994). According to Baumrind (1989, 1991, 1993) each of these parenting patterns predicts important aspects of child development.

Authoritative parents are both responding and demanding (Baumrind, 1991; Smetana, 1994). They exert consistent and firm control but provide clear explanations for their standards (Craig, 1996; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Louw et al., 1998). These parents are loving, supportive, and encourage autonomy (Craig, 1996; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Heath, 1995; Maccoby, 1980; Smetana, 1994). Research has found pre-school children of authoritative parents to be generally self-reliant, self-controlled, explorative, contented, cooperative with adults, achievement oriented, and friendly with peers (Baumrind, 1965,

1966, 1968, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1993; Baumrind & Black, 1967; Dornbusch, 1987 et al.; Heath, 1995; Maccoby, 1980; Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996; Smetana, 1994).

Authoritarian parents are demanding, but not responsive (Baumrind, 1991; Smetana, 1994). They are obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Maccoby, 1980; Smetana, 1994). They impose and enforce many rules and restrictions, and favour punitive methods to gain compliance (Craig, 1996; Heath, 1995; Louw et al., 1998; Smetana, 1994). These parents discourage verbal give-and-take and are not responsive to their children's needs (Smetana, 1994). Research has found that children of authoritarian parents are usually withdrawn, fearful, moody, aimless, unhappy, discontented, unassertive, irritable, exhibit little or no independence and are less able to cope effectively during stressful circumstances (Baumrind, 1965, 1966, 1968; Craig, 1996; Dornbusch et al., 1987; Hart et al., 1998; Heath, 1995; Maccoby, 1980; Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996; Smetana, 1994).

Permissive parents are responsive but not demanding (Baumrind, 1991; Smetana, 1994). They are warm and allow considerable self-regulation of their activities (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Heath, 1995; Smetana, 1994). These parents make few maturity demands and do not insist that their children follow parentally defined standards (Smetana, 1994). Research has found that children of permissive parents are usually aggressive, aimless, domineering, lacking in self-control and self-reliance, and are noncompliant with adults (Maccoby, 1980; Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996; Smetana, 1994). Lawrence Frank (quoted in Baumrind, 1966) expressed concern for the young child who is striving to meet the demands made upon him. The child is under constant tension, which is crystallized into a persistent anxiety about his own competence and functional adequacy.

According to Baumrind (1968) the authoritarian and the permissive parent may both create, in different ways, a climate in which the child is not desensitized to the anxiety associated with nonconformity. Both models dissent, the former by suppression and the latter by diversion or indulgence.

Baumrind also conceptualized other types of parenting styles, including rejecting-neglecting, non-conforming, authoritative nonconforming, authoritarian-rejecting-neglecting (Baumrind, 1989, 1991; Robinson et al., 1995), but for the purpose of the current study, the

focus will be on the three main types of parenting styles commonly studied (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive).

Smetana (1994) pointed out that global typologies might give little information about the ways in which specific parenting practices are related to children's behaviour. Therefore, different parenting practices within a typology could be important to investigate, depending on the specific developmental outcome of interest (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Robinson et al., 1995). Because important developmental tasks during the pre-school years involve the development of autonomy and self-control, parental competence at this age includes setting clear and appropriate limits as well as providing warmth and responsiveness (Belsky, 1984; Cohn, Cowan, Cowan & Pearson, 1992; Lewis, 1981). In accordance with this, previous research on internalizing problems in non-clinical samples has proven over-controlled and anxious behaviour among children to be related to certain patterns of parenting, such as high parental control and low warmth or support (Baumrind, 1966, 1968, 1989; Chorpita & Barlow, 1998; Siqueland et al., 1996). It is thus clear from the previous research done that not only the exploration of main typologies of parenting styles was necessary but that parenting dimensions, such as warmth, support and parental control, needed to be explored in the current study as well.

Therefore, in the current study attention was given to the specific parenting dimensions outlined in research done by Robinson et al. (1995). The 11 **parenting dimensions** explored were warmth and involvement, reasoning or induction, democratic participation, good natured or easy going, verbal hostility, corporal punishment, non-reasoning or punitive strategies, directiveness, lack of follow through, ignoring misbehaviour and self-confidence. The current study explored the general utilisation of these dimensions by the pre-school parents included in this study. It also explored the link between these parenting dimensions and the developmental outcome of the expressed fears, with regard to number, as reported by their pre-school children.

As mentioned, parental control is another parenting construct previous research has linked to fearfulness in children. In the current study a distinction was made between behavioural parental control and **psychological parental control**, the focus being on the latter. Behavioural control refers to parental behaviours that attempt to control or manage children's behaviour (Barber, 1996). In contrast, psychological parental control can be

defined as stylistic patterns of parenting that constrain, invalidate, or manipulate children's psychological and emotional experience and expression (Barber, 1996; Hart et al., 1998). According to Barber (1996), psychological control refers to "control attempts that intrude into the psychological and emotional development of the child (for example thinking processes, self-expression, emotions and attachment to parents)" (p. 3296). It has almost exclusively been conceptualised as a negative form of parental control (Barber, 1996). The process of psychological control involves socialisation pressure that is non-responsive to a child's emotional and psychological needs, that stifles independent expression and autonomy and that does not encourage interaction with others (Barber, 1996; Baumrind, 1965). According to Steinberg (quoted in Barber, 1996) psychological control – the absence of psychological autonomy – affects negatively, while behavioural control – the presence of demandingness – influences positively.

Literature implies that psychological control should have particular effects on internalised problems (inhibited, over-controlled problems that are manifested privately or internally) in children, while behavioural control should have more prominent associations with externalised problems that tend to be more aggressive and socially disruptive (Barber, 1996; Hart, Olsen, Robinson & Mandleco, 1997). In accordance with this, western psychological literature found psychologically controlling parenting styles to be linked to over-controlled, internalising childhood behaviour, such as anxiety, fearfulness, shyness and withdrawal (Hart et al., 1997, 1998; Siqueland et al., 1996; Robinson et al., 1995). For these reasons, the focus of the current study was on psychological control, in addition to the other dimensions mentioned above.

For the purpose of the current study, the term **parenting** referred to the combination of main parenting styles (including dimensional differentiations) as well as the level of psychological control utilised by the parents included in the sample.

As mentioned before, childhood fears may develop in reaction to family atmosphere, which include parenting (Schaefer & Millman, 1981). Furthermore, parenting has been shown to have the greatest effect on the development of children prior to adolescence, because development is influenced by the contexts in which development takes place (Ebata et al., 1990). Research has also proven that the amount of fears is the highest in pre-school children. Several studies suggest an inverted U-curve across childhood and adolescence,

with fears initially increasing from pre-school to early school, and then reducing towards adolescence (Bouldin & Pratt, 1998; King et al., 1997; King, Ollier, Iacuone, Schuster, Boys, Gullone, Ollendick, 1989; Miller et al., 1990; Ollendick et al., 1985). Cross-cultural research done in South Africa on the perceptions of parental task performance revealed a clear perception that mothers are more involved with their children during babyhood and the primary school years than during the pre-school years (Gerdes, Coetzee & Cronjé, 1996). This is worrying in view of the particular developmental tasks of the pre-school stage with regard to sex-role -, psychosocial -, cognitive and moral development (Gerdes et al., 1996). The researchers indicated that more in-depth investigations about the importance attached to specific parenting tasks during particular childhood stages are required (Gerdes et al., 1996). Because of the greater influence of parenting on the development of children prior to adolescence, the importance of this phase for development, and the high incidence of fears among them, pre-school children and their parents were investigated in the current study.

The broad aim of the current study was to explore the nature of parenting in a low to average socio-economic suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area. Parenting was investigated with regard to style most utilised in the sample of pre-school parents. Exploration of the differences and correlations between paternal and maternal parenting styles (including dimensional differentiations) and psychological control were also done. Also, more specific aims included the exploration of parenting in relation to culture, gender of the child and in relation to the specific developmental outcome of fearfulness (reported as number of expressed fears) in pre-school children. Previous research regarding parenting and its relationship to socio-economic status, culture, gender of the child and the specific developmental outcome of fearfulness will now be discussed.

Regarding the influence of **socio-economic status** on parenting, previous research found lower socio-economic status families to be more controlling, power-assertive, authoritarian and arbitrary in their discipline, whereas higher socio-economic parents tend to show more warmth and affection toward their children (Maccoby, 1980). These differences seem to hold across race and culture. In accordance to these findings of previous research conducted in low socio-economic areas, the primary aim of the current study was to

explore the general nature of parenting that is characteristic of pre-school fathers and mothers living in a low to average socio-economic status area.

According to Bornstein (quoted in Holden & Miller, 1999) **culture** can fulfill the function of prescribing, guiding and limiting child rearing, reflecting cultural values, ideologies and beliefs (Gerdes et al., 1996). For example, cross-cultural research reported that authoritarian parenting, which is associated with fearful, timid behaviour and behavioural compliance among European-American children, is associated with assertiveness among African-American girls, thus reflecting cross-cultural differences (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). A cross-cultural South African study by Gerdes et al. (1996) found cross-cultural differences regarding taskload, role uncertainty, perceptions, sources of support and degree of involvement. At the same time, however, the study maintained that similarities between cultural groupings outweighed differences between the different groups studied. The authors maintained that the possible influence of ethnic factors on parenting in South Africa needs further investigation. A secondary aim of the current study was to contribute to existing literature by investigating whether a link existed between the cultural grouping of a parent and the nature of parenting utilized, thus reflecting ethnic parenting differences between the white, black, coloured and Indian parents in the target area.

Specific parent-child relationships may vary with the **gender** of parent and child, leading to different outcomes in the development of boys and girls (Baumrind & Black, 1976). More specifically, Zussman (quoted in Maccoby, 1980) reported that higher and lower socio-economic status parents may differ more in their treatment of their sons than their daughters. In the same study it was reported that lower socio-economic status parents used unqualified power assertion with their sons more frequently than did higher socio-economic status parents, while the two groups did not differ in the amount of power assertion shown with daughters. In accordance to this, another secondary aim of the current study was to explore the link between parenting that is characteristic of the parents included in this research, and the gender of their children.

As mentioned previously, several researchers have shown that parenting has an impact on the personality of the developing child (Barber, 1996; Baumrind, 1972, 1975; Heath, 1995; Louw et al., 1998). More specifically, early research by Baumrind (quoted in Craig, 1996) found that authoritarian parents tend to produce withdrawn, fearful pre-school children who

exhibit little or no independence and are moody, unassertive and irritable. More current research by Rubin and Mills (quoted in Hart et al., 1997) link authoritarian parenting style with internalizing behaviour in children, particularly for those who are extremely withdrawn and fearful. According to Hart et al. (1997), current literature supports the idea that parents who use authoritarian commands combined with psychological constraints on exploration and independence, tend to raise more shy, dependent, anxious, fearful, and withdrawn children. Furthermore, previous research also established a link between the parenting dimensions of low levels of responsiveness or warmth and internalizing behaviour in children (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998; Hart et al., 1997, 1998; Siqueland et al., 1996; Robinson et al., 1995). The same link was also established between the parenting construct psychological control (as opposed to behavioral control) and internalizing behaviour in children (Barber, 1996; Robinson et al., 1995). In accordance to these findings in previous research, the current study aimed to explore the existence of a link between parenting of parents included in this research and the **number of expressed fears** reported by pre-school children.

In conclusion, the research questions, as derived from previous research and the theoretical background discussed, were as follows:

- What is the general nature of parenting that is characteristic of the parents of pre-school children living in a low to average socio-economic status area?
- How does the profile of parenting link with the culture of the pre-school parents?
- How does the profile of parenting link with the gender of the pre-school children of parents included in this research?
- How does the profile of parenting link with the expressed fears, with regard to number, as reported by the pre-school children of the parents included in this research?

2. Method of Research

In order to establish the nature of parenting that is characteristic of the participants, a survey research design was used. The data on the expressed fears of the pre-school children, with regard to number, utilized in this study, was obtained simultaneously in a related study (Keller, in press).

2.1. Participants

The population from which the researcher selected the participants were the parents of pre-school children, between 5 and 7 years old, who were selected and utilized in a related study (Keller, in press). Parents of children attending the 3 identified pre-primary schools situated in the allocated suburb in Goodwood Municipal area were included in this study.

There were potentially 80 children in the 5- to 7-year age range attending the three pre-primary schools identified. On grounds of the feedback received from the parents and their willingness to participate in this research, 50 families were included in this study. The demographics of the pre-school children used in the related study, as described by sex and culture, are depicted in Table 1 (Keller, in press).

Table 1
Frequency Table of Demographic Information about Pre-school Children of Families included in this Research (N=50)

Construct	N	Percentage
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	21	42.0
Female	29	58.0
<u>Culture</u>		
White	22	44.0
Coloured	22	44.0
Indian	5	10.0
Black	1	2.0

The participants in this study were representative of the parents of the multi-cultural pre-school population of the target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area. Cross-ethnic data were obtained with regard to the white, coloured, black and Indian parents of pre-school children in the target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area. As indicated in Table 1, the sample Indian (n=5) and black (n=1) families included in this research is small. This cautions against generalisations of results obtained in this research concerning these cultural groupings. Both Afrikaans- and English speaking participants were included. In this study one- and two-parent families were selected in order to gain a true representation of parenting within the allocated area.

From the 50 willing families and the total group of 98 parents, only 43 fathers and 48 mothers were available to complete the questionnaires. This constituted the inclusion of 41

two-parent families and 9 single-parent families. The demographical information of the parents included in this research (N=91), as described by parental status, marital status, educational level and working schedule are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Parents included in this Research (N=91)

Constructs	N	Percentage
<u>Parental status</u>		
Father	43	47.25
Mother	48	52.75
<u>Educational level of Father</u>		
Grade 7 and Below	2	4.65
Grade 8 to 10	20	46.51
Grade 11 and 12	16	37.21
Tertiary Qualification	5	11.63
<u>Educational Level of Mother</u>		
Grade 7 and Below	7	14.58
Grade 8 to 10	21	43.75
Grade 11 and 12	18	37.50
Tertiary Qualification	2	4.17
<u>Marital Status (50 Families)</u>		
Married	39	78.0
Living Together	2	4.0
Single	2	4.0
Separated	1	2.0
Divorced	6	12.0
<u>Working Schedule (50 Families)</u>		
Both Parents Fulltime	15	30.6
One Parent Fulltime, One Half-Day	10	18.4
One Parent Fulltime, One not	14	28.6
Both Parents not Working	2	4.0
Single Parent Working	9	18.4

From Table 2 it can be seen that the majority of fathers (46.51%) and mothers (43.75%) have an educational level between Grade 8 and 10. The majority of parents (78%) are married, while 4% of the parents included in this study are living together. Thus, there were potentially 41 two-parent families (82%) and 9 single parent families (18%) included in this research. It can also be seen that nearly half (49%) of the pre-school parents included in this research are working fulltime, including two-parent families (30.6%) and single parents (18.4%). Although not reflected in Table 2, it was reported by parents that 42% of the pre-

school children included in the sample attended aftercare in the afternoons, while 36% of the pre-school children were cared for by a person other than a parent. Only 22% of the children were looked after by a parent. Furthermore, it was also reported that 72% of the pre-school children included were allowed the unsupervised watching of 2- to 7- hours of television per day.

Information obtained from the Central Statistical Service (1991) classifies the target area as a low to middle class socio-economic area. This classification is made on grounds of the following criteria:

- Level of education: 12% of the total population of 6 709 have an educational level of Grade 12 or equivalent, as highest qualification. From the total population 0.5% have a post-graduate qualification and 7.5% of the total population are illiterate.
- Income: The average income per household is R2 100,00 per month, while the annual income ranges from R18 001,00 to R30 000,00.
- Status of work: 30% of the population work fulltime, while 5.2% of the population are jobless.

From Table 2 it can be seen that the parents included in this study shows the same tendencies as the general population living in the target area, concerning level of education and work status. The parents of pre-school children included in this research may thus be representative of the total population living in the target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area which is described as low to average in socio-economic status (Central Statistical Service, 1991).

2.2. Measuring Instruments

2.2.1. Biographical Questionnaire (Addendum A). The biographical questionnaire was used to obtain information regarding the educational level (possible indicator of literacy), marital status (indication of one-or two-parent families), working schedule (possible indicator of quantitative time spend with children) and the home language of the 50 families included in this research.

2.2.2. Parenting Styles & Dimensions Questionnaire (Addendum B). This 50-item questionnaire was designed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen and Hart (in press) to assess constellations of parenting behaviours (styles) that create a pervasive interactional climate over a wide range of situations (Robinson et al., 1995). The Parenting Styles & Dimensions Questionnaire (PSD) was developed to allow responses of a parent concerning his/ her own parenting styles, as well as the same parent's opinion of his/ her spouse's parenting style (Robinson et al., 1995). After administration on a group of 6 parents, the questionnaire was adapted to allow only for responses concerning own parenting style, since the original format seemed difficult to understand. Both parents, if available, completed the PSD. During statistical calculations, means of the raw scores were utilized to obtain a profile of parenting styles characteristic of the parents included in this research. The means of each parenting style and included dimensional differentiations were calculated according to specific prescriptions of Robinson et al (in press).

In this study, the PSD was used to obtain an overall indication of the parenting styles of the participants. The three main typologies differentiated by the PSD are the authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting styles. Instead of identifying parents according to a specific parenting style, the PSD indicates scores on the utilization of all three styles. As stated in the literature study, it was also necessary to explore different parenting dimensions, because global typologies might give little information about the ways in which specific parenting practices are related to children's behaviour (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, Robinson et al., 1995, Smetana, 1994). In accordance to this, the study also focused on the exploration of the following 11 dimensions included in the PSD:

- **Authoritative Items:** Warmth and involvement (11 items), Reasoning/ Induction (7 items), Democratic Participation (5 items), Good Natured/ Easy Going (4 items). Factor loadings for the 21 items that constitute the authoritative dimension range from 0.33 to 0.84 with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89 (Robinson et al., in press).
- **Authoritarian Items:** Verbal Hostility (4 items), Corporal Punishment (6 items), Nonreasoning, Punitive Strategies (6 Items), Directiveness (4 items). Factor loadings for the 17 items that constitute the authoritarian dimension range from 0.40 to 0.87 with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 (Robinson et al., in press).

- **Permissive Items:** Lack of Follow Through (6 items), Ignoring Misbehaviour (4 items), Self-confidence (5 items). Factor loadings for the 12 items that constitute the permissive dimension range from 0.41 to 0.83 with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.73 (Robinson et al., in press).

As will be discussed in paragraph 2.4. of this document, assistance was given to parents who had trouble understanding the questionnaire. Without assistance, the approximate time needed to complete the PSD was 15 minutes.

The Kuder Richardson Reliability Coefficient of the PSD was calculated as a measure of reliability of the questionnaire in this study. The Alpha coefficient was found to be 0.81 for the fathers and 0.79 for the mothers.

2.2.3. Psychological Control Scale (Addendum C). As stated in the introduction, psychological control was the other parenting construct measured in this study. The Psychological Control Scale was utilised to measure the level of psychological control utilised by the parents included in this research. The Psychological Control Scale is an adaptation of the dimensions of psychological control outlined by Barber (1996) specifically for use with parents of pre-school children (Hart et al., 1998). Factor loadings for the eight items constituting the Psychological Control Scale range from 0.41 to 0.76 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73.

A previous study conducted by Robinson et al. (1995) successfully utilised the PSD and the Psychological Control Scale together in an ethnic Russian sample to examine relationships between pre-school children's aggression and the parenting styles and marital interaction of their parents.

2.2.4. Measurement of Fears. Data on the expressed fears, with regard to number and content, of the pre-school children in the allocated area, was obtained in a related study (Keller, in press). This was done by means of drawings and a semi-structured interview (Addendum D) with the pre-school children of the parents utilised in the current study. The results of a frequency analysis done to obtain information about the expressed fears, with regard to number and content, of the sample pre-school boys and girls, are depicted in Table 3. Data regarding the content of fears was classified into 12 categories.

Table 3

Frequency Table of the Expressed Fears, with regard to Number and Content, of Pre-school Boys and Girls

Category	Fears: Boys	Percentage of total fears	Fears: Girls	Percentage of total fears	Total (n)	Percentage of total fears
Wild Animals	8	5.52	37	25.52	45	31.02
Domestic Animals	3	2.07	8	5.52	11	7.59
Insects	0	-	4	2.76	4	2.76
Water Animals	3	2.07	2	1.38	5	3.45
Fantasy Animals	9	6.21	9	6.21	18	12.41
Real People	6	4.14	8	5.52	14	9.65
Fantasy People	12	8.27	16	11.03	28	19.31
Dark	4	2.75	3	2.07	7	4.83
Nightmares	1	0.69	2	1.38	3	2.07
Natural Phenomena	2	1.38	1	0.69	3	2.07
Other	5	3.45	2	1.38	7	4.83
Fears: Total number	53	36.55	92	63.45	145	100.00
Average Number:	2.52		3.17		2.90	

From Table 3 it can be seen that a total of 145 fears were reported by the sample of pre-school children. The average number of expressed fears for the pre-school children included in this study is 2.90. This is considerably lower than the average number of expressed fears of 4.77 for pre-school children reported in another study conducted in a middle to high socio-economic area (Martalas, 1999). Although Table 3 also depicts the content of the reported fears of the sample of pre-school children, this data was not utilized statistically in the current study.

Keller (in press) also reported that parents reported fewer fears than their pre-school children. Parents reported a maximum of 4 fears per pre-school child, while the children themselves reported between 1 to 10 fears per child.

2.3. Procedure

A meeting with the head of the institution(s) involved was arranged to discuss the proposed project as well as the granting of permission to carry out the study.

A letter was sent to all the potential participants, informing them of the nature of the research, as well as simultaneously requesting the inclusion of their children in this study.

Their cooperation was requested in completion of the biographical form and parenting questionnaires.

Written permission as well as biographical data were obtained from the parents of the sample of 50 pre-school children (21 boys and 29 girls) used in the related study (Keller, in press). An informative meeting was held at each school, mainly for the involved teachers, but also for the pre-school parents who wished to attend it. The attendance of the meeting by the pre-school parents was low because of difficulties in working schedules. The teachers were informed on the instructions and procedures for each questionnaire, in order to give assistance to parents who later had trouble understanding and completing the questionnaires and needed assistance. The parenting questionnaires were then distributed to the homes of all the families who gave permission to be included in the research. A professional translation of the relevant parenting measures was made available to the Afrikaans-speaking participants.

The parenting questionnaires completed by the parents included in this research were collected simultaneously with the collection of data in the related study on the expressed fears, with regard to number, of their pre-school children (Keller, in press).

2.4. Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed with the statistical programme SPSS (George & Mallery, 1999). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and interpret the research results.

The nature of the paternal and maternal parenting, as well as each of the subsequent research questions were addressed statistically, calculating frequencies, means, standard deviations and minimum and maximum values for parenting styles and dimensions and psychological control. Furthermore, inferential statistics were used to compare subgroups in order to address the supporting research aims of differences between paternal and maternal parenting, parenting and gender of the pre-school child, parenting and culture of the family as well as parenting and number of expressed fears in pre-school children.

The non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test and T-tests were done to determine whether the differences between groups were significant. Non-parametric correlation

studies calculating Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients were done to determine the correlation between parenting and the number of expressed fears in pre-school children.

3. Results

The results of the statistical analysis that addressed each of the research questions will be discussed following a general description of parenting in the target area.

3.1. Description of Parenting

In order to describe the nature of parenting among the 91 pre-school parents in the allocated area, a frequency analysis was performed. As mentioned before, statistical calculation was done by utilizing means of the raw scores to obtain a profile of parenting styles characteristic of the parents included in this research. The means of each parenting style and included dimensional differentiations were calculated on a five-point scale according to specific prescriptions of Robinson et al (in press). The results of the frequency analysis depicting the means of the main paternal and maternal parenting styles and the parenting construct, psychological control, are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of Parenting Styles and Psychological Control of Respondents (N=91)

	Mean	SD*	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
<u>Paternal Parenting Style (n=43)</u>				
Authoritative Parenting Style	3.98	.54	2.57	4.90
Authoritarian Parenting Style	2.46	.72	1.24	4.65
Permissive Parenting Style	1.99	.39	1.33	2.83
Psychological Control	11.29	3.49	8.00	21.00
<u>Maternal Parenting Style (n=48)</u>				
Authoritative Parenting Style	3.88	.47	2.57	4.57
Authoritarian Parenting Style	2.42	.59	1.41	3.47
Permissive Parenting Style	2.01	.52	1.08	3.25
Psychological Control	11.17	3.43	8.00	21.00

* Standard Deviation

From Table 4 it can be seen that the paternal, as well as maternal, parenting style most utilized in this sample of respondents, was the authoritative parenting style, while the levels of paternal and maternal psychological control utilized were fairly low. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was done to establish whether there was a statistically significant difference between the paternal and maternal parenting styles. The same calculation was

also done to establish the existence of a statistically significant difference between paternal and maternal psychological control. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test performed on the paternal and maternal parenting styles and psychological control are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5

Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test for Paternal and Maternal Parenting Styles and Psychological Control

	Parenting Style			Psychological Control
	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Permissive	
Z	-1.43	-.17	-1.03	-.56
p	.15	.86	.30	.58

As indicated by Table 5, no statistically significant difference was found between authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles of the fathers and mothers included in this study. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found between paternal and maternal psychological control.

The Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was calculated to establish the correlations between the three paternal and maternal parenting styles respectively, and psychological control. The Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients (r) between the authoritative (1), authoritarian (2) and permissive (3) parenting styles of the fathers (F) and mothers (M), as well as the psychological control (PC) of both are depicted in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of Spearman's Rho Correlation Matrix for Paternal and Maternal Parenting Style and Psychological Control

	F1	F2	F3	M1	M2	M3	F PC	M PC
F1 Correlation Coefficient	1.000							
F2 Correlation Coefficient	.101	1.000						
F3 Correlation Coefficient	-.215	.258	1.000					
M1 Correlation Coefficient	.340*	.154	.004	1.000				
M2 Correlation Coefficient	.174	.616**	.285	.109	1.000			
M3 Correlation Coefficient	-.207	.294	.573**	-.155	.492**	1.000		
F PC Correlation Coefficient	-.080	.165	.255	-.095	.228	.114	1.000	
M PC Correlation Coefficient	-.066	.190	.219	-.127	.162	.140	.816**	1.000

*.05 Level

** .01 Level

As can be seen in Table 6, significant positive correlations were found between paternal and maternal authoritative parenting style ($r=0.34$; $p<0.05$), paternal and maternal authoritarian parenting style ($r=0.62$; $p<0.01$) as well as between paternal and maternal permissive parenting style ($r=0.57$; $p<0.01$). A significant positive correlation was also found between paternal and maternal psychological control ($r=0.82$; $p<0.01$). The significant positive correlation ($r=0.49$; $p<0.01$) found between maternal authoritarian and permissive parenting styles was discarded as only correlations between the parenting styles of mothers and fathers were relevant.

A frequency analysis was done to statistically describe the 11 parenting dimensions measured in the PSD. The means of the 11 dimensions, as reported by the fathers and mothers separately, are depicted in Table 7.

Table 7

Results of Analysis of Paternal and Maternal Parenting Dimensions

Parenting Dimensions	Paternal Parenting Dimensions		Maternal Parenting Dimensions	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. Warmth and Support	4.29	.54	4.47	.48
2. Reasoning/ Induction	3.39	.66	4.13	.68
3. Democratic Participation	3.25	.99	3.29	.88
4. Responsiveness	4.25	.70	4.17	.58
5. Non-reasoning/ Punitive	2.29	.87	2.25	.65
6. Corporal Punishment	2.27	.83	2.20	.59
7. Directiveness	3.05	.94	2.96	.81
8. Verbal Hostility	2.26	.87	2.33	.82
9. Lacks follow Through	2.59	.64	2.61	.75
10. Ignoring Misbehaviour	1.25	.43	1.26	.44
11. Lacks Self-confidence	1.60	.54	1.80	.65

As can be seen in Table 7, the parenting dimensions most utilized by both fathers and mothers included in this sample, were warmth and support, responsiveness and reasoning or induction. A slight difference was found in the ranking of utilization of these dimensions. For fathers, the dimension of warmth and support was most utilized, followed by responsiveness and reasoning or induction. For mothers the dimension most utilized was also warmth and support, followed by reasoning and induction and by responsiveness. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was conducted to calculate whether the differences in means between the paternal and maternal parenting dimensions were statistically

significant. No statistically significant difference was found between fathers and mothers regarding any of the 11 dimensions of parenting.

Calculation of the Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient, to establish the existence of a correlation between the dimensions of parenting and psychological control, found a statistically significant positive correlation between the non-reasoning/ punitive dimension and psychological control, as reported by fathers ($r=0.35$; $p<0.05$). As reported by mothers, a negative correlation was found between psychological control and the responsiveness dimension ($r=-0.32$; $p<0.05$), and a positive correlation was found between psychological control and the non-reasoning/ punitive dimension ($r=0.31$; $p<0.05$). A statistically significant positive correlation was found between paternal psychological control and maternal non-reasoning/ punitive strategies ($r=0.41$; $p<0.05$).

3.2. Parenting and culture

A T-Test was done to establish whether any significant differences existed between parenting utilized by each of the cultural groups included in the research. Because of the small sample size of black ($n=1$) and Indian parents ($n=5$) of the pre-school children included in this research, these two groups were excluded during statistical calculations concerning culture (Table 1).

Overall, no significant differences were found between the different parenting styles (and included dimensional differentiations) and psychological control utilized by the white ($n=40$) and coloured ($n=39$) preschool parents involved in this study.

Though the differences between parenting utilized by the white and coloured parents included in this research were not found to be statistically significant, the following interesting information regarding the slight parenting preferences of each still came to light. Both white ($n=19$) and coloured ($n=18$) preschool fathers showed the highest preference for the authoritative parenting style, the coloured group's mean ($\bar{X}=4.08$; $SD=0.49$) being slightly higher than the white fathers' ($\bar{X}=3.84$; $SD=0.64$) for this parenting style. The coloured fathers also reported slightly higher levels of psychological control ($\bar{X}=11.69$; $SD=4.08$) than the sample of white preschool fathers ($\bar{X}=10.63$; $SD=2.85$). Regarding the 11 dimensions of parenting, the sample of white fathers reported the highest preference for

Dimension 4, Responsiveness ($\bar{X}=4.13$; $SD=0.71$), and the lowest preference for Dimension 10, Ignoring Misbehaviour ($\bar{X}=1.26$; $SD=0.45$). The sample of coloured fathers reported the highest mean for Dimension 1, Warmth and Support ($\bar{X}=4.37$; $SD=0.56$), and the lowest mean for Dimension 10, Ignoring Misbehaviour ($\bar{X}=1.28$; $SD=0.47$).

Both white ($n=21$) and coloured ($n=21$) preschool mothers showed the highest preference for the authoritative parenting style, the coloured group's mean ($\bar{X}=3.96$; $SD=0.40$) being slightly higher than the white mothers' ($\bar{X}=3.82$; $SD=0.55$) for this parenting style. The coloured mothers also reported slightly higher levels of psychological control ($\bar{X}=11.60$; $SD=3.39$) than the sample of white preschool mothers ($\bar{X}=10.60$; $SD=3.39$). Regarding the 11 dimensions of parenting, the sample of white mothers reported the highest mean for Dimension 1, Warmth & Support ($\bar{X}=4.46$; $SD=0.50$), and the lowest mean for Dimension 10, Ignoring Misbehaviour ($\bar{X}=1.27$; $SD=0.47$). Similarly, the sample of coloured mothers also reported the highest mean for Dimension 1, Warmth and Support ($\bar{X}=4.50$; $SD=0.50$), and the lowest mean for Dimension 10, Ignoring Misbehaviour ($\bar{X}=1.30$; $SD=0.48$).

3.3. Parenting and gender of the child

Statistical analysis done to explore the existence of significant differences in paternal parenting concerning pre-school boys ($n=21$) and girls ($n=29$) respectively, and maternal parenting concerning pre-school boys and girls respectively will now be reported. Statistical analysis concerning parenting and gender of the child was performed with the statistical programme SPSS (George & Mallery, 1999).

Regarding paternal parenting, a T-Test found no significant differences between parenting style (and included dimensions), psychological control and the gender of their pre-school children. Thus, according to the statistical analysis, no differences exist between the paternal parenting of pre-school boys and girls.

Regarding maternal parenting, the T-test found no statistically significant differences between parenting style, psychological control and the gender of their pre-school children. However, regarding parenting dimensions, a statistically significant difference was found concerning Dimension 3, Democratic Participation ($t=-2.39$; $df=46$; $p=0.02$). The sample

mothers reported higher utilization of democratic participation during parenting of pre-school girls ($\bar{X}=3.52$; $SD=0.71$) than parenting of pre-school boys ($\bar{X}=2.93$; $SD=1.00$).

3.4. Parenting and expressed fears

The Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was calculated to establish whether any correlation existed between the three paternal and maternal parenting styles, parenting dimensions, psychological control and the expressed fears, with regard to number, of the pre-school children.

For fathers, no significant correlation was found between authoritative ($r=0.28$), authoritarian ($r=-0.07$) or permissive ($r=0.07$) parenting styles (including dimensional differentiations), psychological control ($r=-0.09$) and the expressed fears of their pre-school children at the 0.05 or the 0.01 level.

For mothers, a significant positive correlation was found between maternal authoritative parenting style and the number of expressed fears ($r=0.35$; $p<0.05$). Regarding maternal parenting dimensions, a significant positive correlation was found between the Reasoning/Induction dimension and the number of expressed fears ($r=0.35$; $p<0.05$). No significant correlation was found between maternal psychological control and the number of expressed fears ($r=-0.07$) at the 0.05 or 0.01 level.

4. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to investigate the general nature of parenting that is characteristic of pre-school parents in a lower socio-economic suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area. To answer the research questions stipulated in the introduction, parenting was also investigated with regard to the existence of cross-cultural variances, the relationship it may have with the gender of the pre-school child and also with the number of expressed fears in pre-school children.

In this study the parenting style most utilized, as reported by the pre-school fathers and mothers included in the sample respectively, is the authoritative parenting style (see Table 4). This concludes that within families included in this research, the needs of pre-school children for limit setting and nurturance are satisfied by the responsiveness and demandingness of their parents (Baumrind, 1991). Also, the level of psychological control

utilized by both fathers and mothers is low (Table 4). This tendency supports the finding that the majority of pre-school parents are being more authoritative in their style of parenting, because low levels of psychological control indicate an absence of socialization pressure that is non-responsive to children's emotional and psychological needs (Barber, 1996). Both aspects of parenting - authoritative parenting and the utilization of low levels of psychological control - encourage a positive parenting climate conducive to the development of psychological autonomy in the pre-school children included in this sample.

Further investigation of the main parenting typologies revealed a positive correlation between paternal and maternal authoritative parenting style (see Table 4). This indicates that the primary utilization of a certain level of authoritative parenting by one parent could be conducive to the utilization of the same level of authoritative parenting by the other parent involved. The same relationship also exists between paternal and maternal authoritarian and permissive parenting style, indicating the possibility that parenting style utilized by one parent could be nurturing of the same level of parenting style in the other.

Further exploration of the levels of psychological control revealed a positive correlation between paternal and maternal psychological control. This indicates that the levels of psychological control utilized by the pre-school fathers and mothers in this study correspond with each other. Interesting conclusions can be deducted from this finding. Firstly, if one parent exhibits a certain level of psychological control, it is conducive to the other parent's utilization of the same level of control. Further research will be helpful in establishing whether the primary level of psychological control utilized by parents is dictated by the characteristics of the father, the mother, the child or possibly another variable. Secondly, according to literature, if both parents utilize high levels of psychological control, the possible existence of internalizing childhood behaviour, such as insecurity, fearfulness or withdrawal, is induced (Barber, 1996). In this study however, low levels of psychological control were utilized, indicating the possible absence of high levels of internalizing behaviour, and the possible presence of high levels of externalizing behaviour in the pre-school children included in the sample. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this study to investigate externalizing behaviour in the pre-school children of the parents involved. However, the relationship between parenting and the expressed fears in the pre-school children will be discussed in more detail later.

To reveal a more detailed description of the styles of parenting utilized by this sample of pre-school parents, it was also necessary to investigate specific parenting dimensions within the main typologies. This was done by analyzing the 11 parenting dimensions measured with the PSD (see Table 7). In this sample of pre-school parents, it is evident that both the fathers' and mothers' parenting styles reflect responsiveness, reasoning, warmth and support while interacting with their children - all of which are typical in authoritative parenting. (Robinson et al, 1995). At the same time, the pre-school parents in this study are less likely to ignore misbehaviour in their children and possess high levels of self-confidence where their parenting is concerned.

Further exploration of the levels of psychological control and the dimensions of parenting within the typologies reveal that high levels of psychological control reflect non-reasoning or punitive parenting in both the fathers and mothers, while highly responsive mothers exhibit low levels of psychological control. Thus, in this target area, psychologically controlling parenting reflects practices where parents do not reason with their children, are more punitive and show lower levels of responsiveness. This is consistent with previous research, which went further to imply that these parenting practices are conducive to higher levels of insecure and internalizing behaviours in children (Barber, 1996; Hart et al., 1997; Robinson et al., 1995).

Thus far the discussion has focused on describing the general parenting styles, with regard to typology, dimensions and level of psychological control, of the sample pre-school parents included in this research. As mentioned before, all the parents included in this study were living in a low to average socio-economic target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area at the time, thus providing a clearer picture of parenting that is characteristic of pre-school parents with low to average socio-economic status. As indicated in the introduction, previous research by Maccoby (1980) found lower socio-economic status families to be more authoritarian in their style of parenting, showing less warmth and affection toward their children. This is contrary to the finding in this research where the parents in the low to average socio-economic area are shown to be more authoritative in their parenting and possess over high levels of warmth, support and responsiveness.

A possible reason for this contrasting finding could be that lower socio economic families actually differ greatly among themselves in many different aspects such as psychological stability and the organization of family life (Maccoby, 1980). According to Maccoby (1980) parental psychological instability in itself may be more indicative of certain parenting practices than socio-economic status. Thus, child-rearing across different socio-economic levels would be more similar if unstable families were identified and eliminated. In the current study in a low to average socio-economic target area, parenting is found to be consistent with previous research in high socio-economic families. According to the argument stated by Maccoby (1980), this could indicate the absence of unstable psychological factors within the families, thus explaining the higher incidence of responsible parenting which is more reflective of higher psychological stability than descriptive of socio-economic status differences.

Regarding culture, no statistically significant cross-cultural variance was found between the paternal or maternal parenting of white and coloured pre-school parents included in this research. Because of the small sample size of black ($n=1$) and Indian parents ($n=5$), these two groups were excluded during statistical calculations concerning culture. Thus, in this low to average socio-economic target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal Area, no significant difference is found between the parenting of white and coloured pre-school parents. This is consistent with a cross-cultural South African study where similarities between cultural groupings outweighed differences between different groups studied (Gerdes, Coetzee & Cronjé, 1996). The similarities in cross-cultural parenting could possibly indicate that socio-economic status could be a better indicator of homogenic parenting styles in an area than culture. In fact, Holden and Miller (1999), stated that membership in a specific social class, ethnic or religious group, can provide implicit or explicit models of child-rearing and constraints on individual variation in parenting. According to these researchers, it is likely that these sub-cultural variations can be as potent or even stronger than more general cultural influences on parenting. Thus, in this lower socio-economic area, it may very well be that social class inhibits individual variation in parenting, dictating similar authoritative practices in most. Further research is needed to compare cross-cultural parenting within and between different socio-economic status-areas.

According to Baumrind and Black (1976), specific parent-child relationships vary with gender of the child. This is consistent with the finding in this research where mothers reported higher utilization of democratic participation during parenting of pre-school girls than parenting of pre-school boys. Paternal parenting revealed no such differences, indicating that the parenting by the sample fathers is the same regardless of the gender of their pre-school children included in this research. Unfortunately, this study did not investigate intra-familial practices, where it will be more informative and conclusive to analyze whether paternal and maternal parenting vary for cross-gender siblings.

In the introduction it was indicated that both the authoritarian and the permissive parent may create, in different ways, a climate in which the child is not desensitized to the anxiety associated with nonconformity (Baumrind, 1996). It was said that both models deviate from ideal levels of demandingness and responsiveness – the first by suppression and the latter by diversion or indulgence. In accordance, literature has found children of authoritative parents to be, amongst other characteristics, the least fearful and the most contented (Baumrind, 1965, 1966, 1968, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1993; Baumrind & Black, 1967; Dornbusch et al, 1987; Heath, 1995; Maccoby, 1980; Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996; Smetana, 1994).

Up to this point, the discussion has revealed the general presence of authoritative parenting styles by both the fathers and mothers included in this study. It also revealed the general utilization of fairly low levels of psychological control by both parents. According to literature both of these are conducive to the absence of internalizing behaviour (which includes fearfulness) in children (Barber, 1996; Robinson et al, 1998). Thus, at this point it can be predicted that the number of expressed fears in the sample of pre-school children included in this research, should be fairly low. In fact, this prediction is supported by the finding that the average number of expressed fears per pre-school child found by Keller (in press) was in fact considerably lower in comparison to a similar study conducted by Martalas (1999) in a higher socio-economic area in the Atlantic Seaboard. In accordance to the aims of this study, it could thus be hypothesized that this finding is reflective of the high levels of authoritative parenting, the low levels of psychological control and the high levels of responsiveness, warmth and support, all being descriptive of this sample of pre-school parents.

Interestingly enough, in this study statistical analysis found a positive relationship between the number of fears expressed by the pre-school children involved, and maternal authoritative parenting style. This rejects the above-mentioned hypothesis that predicted the opposite. Furthermore, it was also indicated that the maternal parenting dimension of reasoning or induction, an authoritative parenting dimension, related to a higher number of expressed fears in the pre-school children involved. Several factors could be helpful in explaining these findings.

Firstly, previous research on Baumrind's parenting styles and resultant child outcomes has mainly been conducted in white middleclass and professional populations, thus complicating generalization of findings to a multi-cultural, lower socio-economic area (Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996). Furthermore, even though the PSD itself has been tested in several countries, including Russia, the United States of America and in China, it has never been utilized in a study on low to average socio-economic status South African parents (Hart et al., 1998; Robinson et al., 1995; Wu et al., in press). This complicates interpretation of findings, as items composing the parenting styles and the dimensions included, may be interpreted differently within a South African context and within a low to average socio-economic status area where the educational level of parents is low. It should also be said that some of the parents were apprehensive of the questionnaires regarding their parenting. The study and its aims were explained thoroughly to them, but the possibility still exists that they may have given a false positive image of their parenting as reflected by the questionnaires, thus influencing the profile of parenting that is characteristic of the pre-school parents in the target area.

Secondly, according to Darling and Steinberg (1993) there is no empirical basis on which to draw conclusions about how the appropriateness of different parenting may vary depending on the child's developmental stage. It might thus be possible that maternal authoritative parenting styles in the allocated area may be conducive to higher levels of fearfulness in the pre-school children in this study, while other parenting styles may be more conducive to higher levels of fearfulness in other developmental stages.

Thirdly, according to literature, pre-school children have the highest number of fears and certain fears are developmentally appropriate (Louw et al., 1998). This indicates that

parenting style in itself need not be conducive to fearfulness in pre-school children, because it could be developmentally appropriate to have high levels of fear in pre-school years. The number of age-inappropriate fears on the other hand, may have a link with parenting styles, but also to numerous other variables, such as violence or socio-economic status to mention but a few (Keller, in press). In order to establish for certain whether the authoritative parenting style is conducive to the expressed fears in children living in a low to average socio-economic area, more than one child per household needs to be included in the research.

Thus, it should also be considered that other mediating variables, such as the amount of unsupervised television may be equally, or even more conducive to higher levels of expressed fears in pre-school children than parenting itself (Keller, in press). In this study it was reported that 73% of the pre-school children was allowed two to seven hours unsupervised television per day. Another mediating variable could be time spent with the pre-school child. Previous research in South Africa found that mothers spend less time with their pre-school children than with their younger or older siblings (Gerdes, Coetzee & Cronjé, 1996). Unfortunately it was beyond the scope of this study to include siblings, but consideration of the finding that 49% of the parents worked full-time as well as the amount of time spent in front of the television and the fact that only 22% of the pre-school children were looked after by a parent after school, could be an indicator that the parents included in this study spend little time with their children.

Fourthly, even though the majority of mothers are authoritative in their style of parenting, it does not indicate higher responsiveness and awareness of the expressed fears in their children. This is substantiated by the finding that parents included in this study reported fewer fears than their pre-school children. Parents reported a maximum of 4 fears per pre-school child, while the children reported between 1 to 10 fears per child. This tendency supports previous research showing that mothers underestimated the expressed fears of their children by 41% (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 1997).

Finally, the parenting dimension of reasoning or induction (an authoritative parenting dimension) used during interaction with this sample of pre-school children, might be conducive in itself to a higher number of expressed fears in the children. This may influence the statistical analysis of the overall significance of authoritative parenting in the

amount of fears in the pre-school children included in this research. According to Maccoby (1980), it is not only the presence of communication or reasoning, but also the content thereof that is important in predicting certain childhood outcomes. It will be interesting to investigate whether the content of reasoning, in focusing on certain aspects in the environment or possibly reflecting parental fears, is conducive to creating a higher number of expressed fears in their children.

It is also important to mention that this study failed to establish a link between fearfulness, as measured by the number of expressed fears in pre-school children, and parental warmth, responsiveness and psychological control. This is contrasting to previous research discussed in the introduction which resulted in specifying a relationship between internalizing behaviour in children and parenting characterized by low levels of warmth and responsiveness and high levels of psychological control. To validate these findings, it may be necessary to measure other internalizing behaviours, such as anxiety, withdrawal, depression or shyness, in pre-school children as well.

5. Conclusion

This study contributes to existing literature by revealing the nature of pre-school parenting in a low to average socio-economic target suburb in the Goodwood Municipal area. It was shown that the majority of pre-school parents utilize an authoritative parenting style, complemented by high levels of responsiveness, warmth and support, and low levels of psychological control. In the light of the current, as well as previous research findings, it can be said that the majority of parents in this target area encourage a positive parenting climate conducive to positive developmental outcomes, such as psychological autonomy, in their children.

This study also reveals that no cross-cultural variance exists between parenting utilized by white and coloured pre-school parents included in this research. Furthermore, besides mothers reporting higher democratic participation in parenting with the pre-school girls than boys, no other cross-gender variances are established between maternal and paternal parenting and the gender of their pre-school children. It can thus be concluded that the nature of pre-school parenting in this low to average socio-economic target area is homogenic to a large extent and not reflective of cross-cultural or cross-gender differences.

This study also contributes to existing literature on child development by exploring the link between parenting and the specific developmental outcome of expressed fears in pre-school children. More specifically, a positive relationship exists between the utilization of the authoritative parenting style by mothers included in this research and the number of expressed fears as reported by their pre-school children. This finding is interesting, especially since previous research, as discussed in the introduction of this document, linked authoritative parenting to positive developmental outcomes in children, while authoritarian parenting was linked to internalizing behaviour, such as fearfulness and anxiety in children. Possible explanations for these contradictory findings does exist, but it is also important to keep in mind that important limitations exist in any research, influencing results and the interpretation thereof.

The first limitation of this study was that it focused on parenting with one target child only. The current study attempted to understand the influence of the environment by making comparisons between families – thus correlating differences in parenting styles across families measured by the developmental outcome of one child per family. The current study did not leave room for the fact that although parenting can and does differ from family to family, this is not important to development unless it also happens to differ within the family (Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996). It is possible that parents may respond differently to different children in the family and it is also possible that a given style of parenting may have different impact on different children within the same family (Maccoby, 1980). This was not taken into consideration during the current research where it was presumed that the nature of parenting within a family was applicable to the pre-school child included in the research, while it may have been more applicable to sibling(s) in the same family.

The second limitation of this study is that it sufficed with the amount of expressed fears of pre-school children as the only developmental outcome of interest. It would have been even more revealing to link parenting to another indicator of internalizing behaviour in pre-school children as well. More information is needed to substantiate the finding that maternal authoritative parenting is linked with internalizing behaviour in pre-school children in a low to average socio-economic target area. Anxiety as an indicator of the degree of intensity the pre-school child associates with the expressed fears, will be a good variable to include in replication of this research in another geographical area.

The third limitation of this study was the inclusion of only three main global typologies of parenting styles, namely the authoritative -, authoritarian - and permissive styles. This led to the exclusion of other typologies conceptualized by Baumrind, including rejecting-neglecting, non-conforming, authoritative nonconforming and authoritarian-rejecting-neglecting (Baumrind, 1989, 1991; Robinson et al., 1995). Inclusion of these will be more descriptive of parenting in any given community.

Another important limitation of this and previous research done on parenting is the lack of essential control factoring out the effects of heredity. It is impossible to determine whether the observed developmental outcome of expressed fears in this study is the result of environment (including parenting), heredity, or a combination of the two (Mekertichian & Bowes, 1996). Another variable not taken into account was the expressed fears of the sample parents themselves. It is possible that the expressed fears reported by pre-school children may be linked to modeling of the same fears by their parents, rather than linked to parenting itself.

As shown in this study, the link between parenting and specific developmental outcomes in children cannot be denied. Even so, it remains impossible to conclude that it is the only variable conducive to a specific developmental outcome in a given child. Regarding research on parenting and development, Darling and Steinberg (1993) concluded that parenting style is best understood as a context within which socialization occurs, rather than a socialization practice itself. This implies the careful investigation of how the effectiveness of specific parenting practices varies as a function of this context.

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Addendum A

Parents/ Guardians: Biographical Data

1.

Name and surname of child

2.

Date of birth

3.

Gender

Male

Female

4.

Home address

5.

Parents marital status

Married

Living together

Single

Separated

Divorced

6.

Religion of

Child

Father

Mother

7.

Child lives with

Both parents

Mother

Father

Other - specify

8.

Siblings

Brothers (ages)

Sisters

9.

Language of

Child

Mother

Father

Other(specify)

10.

Occupation

Mother:

Father:

Other:

11.

Highest Education of:

Mother:

Grade 7 and below

☐

Grade 8 to 10

☐

Grade 10 to 12

☐

Tertiary qualification (Specify)

Father

Grade 7 and below

☐

Grade 8 to 10

☐

Grade 10 to 12

☐

Tertiary qualification (Specify)

Guardian/ Caregiver:

Grade 7 and below

☐

Grade 8 to 10

☐

Grade 10 to 12

☐

Tertiary qualification (Specify)

12. Does your child go to aftercare?

Yes	No
-----	----
13. If no, who looks after him/ her at home?

--
14. Do you have a television at home?

Yes	No
-----	----
15. Approximately, how many hours per day does your child spend watching television?

--
16. Approximately, how many hours do you spend with him/ her watching television?

--

Addendum B

Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSD)*

Directions:

This questionnaire is designed to measure how often you exhibit certain behaviours towards your child_____ (name).

Example:

Please read each item on the questionnaire and think about how often you exhibit this behavior and place your answer on the line to the left of the item.

___ 1. I allow our child to choose what to wear to school.

I EXHIBIT THIS BEHAVIOR:

1 = Never

2 = Once in Awhile

3 = About Half of the Time

4 = Very Often

5 = Always

* Utilized with permission from C.C. Robinson

- _____ 1. I encourage our child to talk about the child's troubles.
- _____ 2. I guide our child by punishment more than by reason.
- _____ 3. I am unsure on how to solve our child's misbehavior.
- _____ 4. I find it difficult to discipline our child.
- _____ 5. I give praise when our child is good.
- _____ 6. I spank when our child is disobedient.
- _____ 7. I joke and play with our child.
- _____ 8. I demand that our child does/do things.
- _____ 9. I show sympathy when our child is hurt or frustrated.
- _____ 10. I punish by taking privileges away from our child with little if any explanations.
- _____ 11. I spoil our child.
- _____ 12. I give comfort and understanding when our child is upset.
- _____ 13. I yell or shout when our child misbehaves.
- _____ 14. I am easy going and relaxed with our child.
- _____ 15. I allow our child to annoy someone else.
- _____ 16. I explain the consequences of the child's behavior.
- _____ 17. I scold and criticize to make our child improve.
- _____ 18. I show patience with the child.
- _____ 19. I grab our child when being disobedient.
- _____ 20. I state punishments to our child and do not actually do them.
- _____ 21. I show respect for our child's opinions by encouraging our child to express them.
- _____ 22. I allow our child to give input into family rules.
- _____ 23. I argue with our child.
- _____ 24. I am confident about parenting abilities.
- _____ 25. I give our child reasons why rules should be obeyed.
- _____ 26. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.
- _____ 27. I tell our child that we appreciate what the child tries or accomplishes.
- _____ 28. I punish by putting our child somewhere alone with little if any explanations.

- _____ 29. I help our child to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging our child to talk about the consequences of own actions.
- _____ 30. I am afraid that disciplining our child for misbehavior will cause the child to not like his or her parents.
- _____ 31. I take our child's desires into account before asking the child to do something.
- _____ 32. I explode in anger towards the child.
- _____ 33. I am aware of problems or concerns about the child in school.
- _____ 34. I threaten the child with punishment more than actually giving it.
- _____ 35. I express affection by hugging, kissing, and holding the child.
- _____ 36. I ignore the child's misbehavior.
- _____ 37. I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining the child.
- _____ 38. I carry out discipline after the child misbehaves.
- _____ 39. I take into account the child's preferences in making plans for the family.
- _____ 40. I tell our child what to do.
- _____ 41. I give in to the child when the child causes a commotion about something.
- _____ 42. I talk it over and reason with the child when the child misbehaves.
- _____ 43. I slap our child when the child misbehaves.
- _____ 44. I explain to the child how we feel about the child's good and bad behavior.
- _____ 45. I allow our child to interrupt others.
- _____ 46. I emphasize the reasons for rules.
- _____ 47. When two children are fighting, I discipline the children first and ask questions later.
- _____ 48. I encourage our child to freely express (himself)(herself) even when disagreeing with parents.
- _____ 49. When our child asks why (he)(she) has to conform, I state: because I said so, or I am your parent and I want you to.
- _____ 50. I scold or criticize when our child's behavior does not meet our expectations.

Addendum C

Psychological Control Scale*

1= Not like me 2=Somewhat like me 3=A lot like me

I am a parent who...

- (a)...ceases to talk to my child until he/she pleases me again
- (b)...is less friendly when my child does not see things my way
- (c)...does not look at my child when he/she disappoints me
- (d)...says, "If you really cared for me, you would not make me worry"
- (e)...tells the child he/she is not as good as other children
- (f)...tells the child he/she is not as good as I was growing up
- (g)...makes the child feel guilty when he/she does not meet expectations
- (h)...reminds the child of things I have done for him/her

*The questionnaire (Hart et al, 1998) as adapted from the Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (Barber, 1996) was utilized in this research. Utilized with permission from B.K. Barber.

Addendum D

Semi-Structured Interview

1. Everybody is sometimes afraid of something.
2. Do you know what it means to be afraid of something?
3. Please make a drawing of something you are afraid of. While you are busy, you can tell me what you are drawing.
4. Why are you afraid of _____?
5. Have you ever seen a _____?

Questions 4 and 5 will not always be asked. It will only be asked to motivate a discussion with the participant, if necessary. If the response on Question 3 is negative, the following question will be asked:

6. What are you afraid of? (Point to the Draw-a-person drawing)
7. Are there other things you are afraid of?
8. What are the children in your class afraid of?

Question 8 will not always be asked. It will only be asked to motivate a discussion with the participant, if necessary. If the response on Question 6 is negative, the following question will be asked:

9. Can you tell me what frightens you most?